

**AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS**

Please amend the claims as follows:

1 - 21 cancelled

22. (previously presented) A nonwoven web material comprising cellulosic fibres and synthetic fibres selected from at least one of polyamide fibres, polyamide copolymer fibres, polyester fibres, polyester copolymer fibres, polyolefin fibres and polyolefin copolymer fibres, wherein the web material exhibits lower cross direction wet expansion than a similar web material comprising only the same cellulosic fibres.

23. (cancelled)

24. (previously presented) The web material of claim 22 in which the cellulosic fibres include abaca fibres, vegetable fibres or mixtures thereof.

25. (currently amended) The web material of claim 22 in which the cellulosic fibres include at least some woodpulp fibres in an amount of up to 50% by weight of a total weight of cellulosic and synthetic fibres.

26. (previously presented) The web material of claim 22 in which the synthetic fibres comprise from 0.5 to 20% by weight of a total weight of cellulosic and synthetic fibres.

27. (previously presented) The web material of claim 22 in which the synthetic fibres comprise from 3 to 9% by weight of a total weight of cellulosic and synthetic fibres.

28. (previously presented) The web material of claim 22 in which the web material is wet-laid from a fibrous mixture containing cellulosic fibres and the synthetic fibres.

29. (previously presented) A method for lowering cross direction wet expansion of a

nonwoven web material comprising: mixing cellulosic and synthetic fibres selected from at least one of polyamide fibres, polyamide copolymer fibres, polyester fibres, polyester copolymer fibres, polyolefin fibres and polyolefin copolymer fibres; and forming the mixed fibres into the nonwoven web, wherein the nonwoven web material exhibits lower cross direction wet expansion than a similar web material comprising only the same cellulosic fibres.

30. (currently amended) The method of claim 29 wherein the cellulosic fibres include at least some woodpulp fibres in an amount of up to 50% by weight of a total weight of cellulosic and synthetic fibres.

31. (previously presented) The method of claim 29 in which the step of forming comprises wet-laying the fibre mixture on a papermaking machine.

32. (previously presented) The method of claim 29 comprising impregnating the nonwoven web material with binder.

33. (previously presented) The method of claim 29 further comprising substantially coating the nonwoven web material with a viscose solution and subsequently regenerating cellulose from the viscose solution to form a casing material adapted for the packaging of food products.

34. (previously presented) A bonded casing paper comprising a nonwoven web material comprising cellulosic and synthetic fibres selected from at least one of polyamide fibres, polyamide copolymer fibres, polyester fibres, polyester copolymer fibres, polyolefin fibres and polyolefin copolymer fibres, the web material having lower cross direction wet expansion than a similar web material comprising only the same cellulosic fibres, wherein the web material is bonded with regenerated cellulose or a resin binder or a mixture of resin binders.

35. (previously presented) The bonded casing paper of claim 34 further including impregnation with viscose from which cellulose is thereafter regenerated to form a casing material for packaging of sausage or other meat product or other food products.

36. (previously presented) The web material of claim 34 in which drying of the web material is effected by a plurality of heated cylinders.

37. (previously presented) A casing paper, suitable for the preparation of casing material for the packaging of sausage or other meat product or other food products, which casing paper contains a web material comprising cellulosic fibres and synthetic fibres, the web material being bonded with regenerated cellulose or with a binder resin or mixture of resin binders, wherein the synthetic fibres are selected from at least one of (i) fibres made of an organic polymer selected from polyester, polyester copolymer, polyamide, polyamide copolymer, polyolefin and polyolefin copolymer and (ii) fibres made of a mixture of at least two organic polymers selected from polyester, polyester copolymer, polyamide, polyamide copolymer, polyolefin and polyolefin copolymer.

38. (previously presented) A casing paper according to claim 37 in which the cellulosic web includes abaca fibres, vegetable fibres or mixtures thereof.

39. (currently amended) A casing paper according to claim 37 in which the cellulosic web includes at least some woodpulp fibres in an amount of up to 50% by weight of a total weight of cellulosic and synthetic fibres.

40. (previously presented) A casing paper according to claim 37 in which the content of synthetic fibres in the web material is from 0.5 to 20% by weight of a total weight of cellulosic and synthetic fibres.

41. (previously presented) A casing paper according to claim 37 in which the content of synthetic fibres in the web material is from 3 to 9% by weight of a total weight of cellulosic and synthetic fibres.

42. (previously presented) A process for preparing casing paper, comprising: forming a web material containing cellulose fibres and synthetic fibres; and impregnating the web material with a resin binder, or a mixture of resin binders, or with viscose, wherein the synthetic fibres are selected from at least one of (i) fibres made of an organic polymer selected from polyester, polyester copolymer, polyamide, polyamide copolymer, polyolefin and polyolefin copolymer and (ii) fibres made of a mixture of the organic polymers.

43. (previously presented) A process according to claim 42, in which the web material is formed by a wet-laying method.

44. (previously presented) A process according to claim 42, comprising drying at least one of the web material or the casing paper by means of a plurality of heated cylinders.